

Oracle Newspaper.

Shakesperian Hunt Aug. 15th 1799.

Aid me my Muse, for I would tell of Things
Surpassing all that's mortal: of wonders
That were they not fresh in our remembrances,
Might be deemed delusion fiction's Offspring,
Oh! that my Quill were pluck'd from Fancy's Wing,
Then should I pen my Tale in glowing Phrase,
For such it merits. 'Tis wonder's Offspring,
And Fancy shou'd the wondrous Theme record;
I am but earthly, that must plead excuse,
If lack of Frenzy's Language shall be found
In this my strange Narrative. I possess
Such knowledge of the Fact as none can boast,
Save him who wrought the Action. He will know
If Truth or Falseness stain my Chronicle.

Be he for ever dumb if I speak fair;
If foul-mouth'd he my story'd Page should blot,
Let him the Truth proclaim, and stamp me base:

For ever hold me up to public Scorn,
That I may bear a Liar's hateful Name.

Against the briny Flood proud Albion's Cliffs
Majestic show their Fronts. In attitude

Aspiring to the azure-vaulted Roof,
Star-fretted. Its sides of snow complexion

As the Adamant indissoluble,
Badly withstands the Surges dread attacks,

And fixed immutable defy the shock
Of mould'ring Time and warring Elements.

Upon this Isle renown'd London spreads
Her form magnificent, where Liberty,

Enchanting Goddess, sits enthron'd and smiles
To see her darling Children's happiness,

Hard by the Bank of silvery Thames, where once
A stately Palace of the Norfolk's stood,

Enacted was my Theme's reality.
Long was the Mansion fam'd for its Contents.

The Walls with rarest works of art were grac'd;
Each Chamber boasted some antiquity,

Vouch'd genuine by Sages of experience,
Yet one in beauty far excell'd the rest.

A Study amply deck'd with choicest Works
Of British Authors fam'd, there might be seen

Of Chaucer, Gower, and St. Edmund's Monk
Of Spencer, Shakspeare, and a hundred more

Editions rare. 'Twas there you might behold
The wrought apparel of renowned Sydney,

The bead-strung Tassels of the martyr'd Charles,
And blood-stain'd Cromwell's Coat, The sculptur'd

Chair
Where Shakspeare oft have sat, while on his knee,

With glowing Cheek upon his Heart reclin'd,
The lovely Anna heard his talk of Love.

There your Eye would gaze on Casements lofty
Whose Gothic forms were richly stor'd with Glass

Of varied dyes diffusing wide around
The Rainbow's Tints, a gleam monastical.

Besides its Lord* within this Mansion dwell
Two Maids, his daughters, and a Matron sage;

The Soul of one to Music was allied, +

* Samuel Ireland
+ Anna Maria Ireland

The Pencil grac'd the second's Hand; the third
Claim'd kindred with the fire-brained God whose
Thought

In tripping measures flow. Yet one there was
Beneath this Roof, of whom I most would speak,

The last-born of this Family. A Youth, †
Of whom Report have spread a thousand Tales

Most to dispraise, Few to commend his Name

NO II

In early Days, The converse of his Sire
Was wont to please his Fancy. With delight

He listen'd to the Leys of ancient Times;
Read o'er and o'er old legendary Tales,

And Ballads that recorded val'rous deeds
Of English Heroe's bold. At length, the fate

Of hapless Chatterton assailed his Ear;
Oft he ponder'd o'er the unhappy Record,

Yet would have gladly shar'd his luckless end
To be the Partner of his Fame renown'd.

Thus time elapsed, till the revolving Years
Had eighteen Summers told. 'Twas then the

Youth,
With Usury inspir'd first dar'd assay

His lofty purpose. Like the unthinking Boy
Whose Hand untutor'd mov'd the rein assume

Of Phoebus mettled Coursers. So he strove
To drive the Chariot of our English Sun

And bear his Godlike Name. Th' attempt was
hold;

But, like Apollo's Sun, he aim'd too high,
And, from the lofty seat was headlong hurled

By thunders launch'd from direful Critic's
Hand.

But, hold! Now to rehearse the varg'd Themes
His brain essay'd. Humbly at first he strove

A Signature to pen. The Cheat prevailed;
For most who saw the Fiction credited,

Fame's Trump their widely spread that
wond'rous Tale;

'Twas soon the public converse; naught was
heard

But Shakspeare's Name rever'd. Thus accomplish'd
The primal purpose, his procreant Brain

Attempted next the style to imitate —
When the religious Tenets of our Bard

In meekest strains appear'd. This was received
And by the World admir'd, Our Shakspeare's

Note

And the Receipt by Heminge penn'd came next
To strike with wonder: For Bills of Promise

A custom had been deem'd of modern date;
Yet this was overlook'd, so prone is Man

To credit wonders which he'd fain believe.
A late traditionary next was vouch'd,

The whimsical Conceit to Cowley sent —
The Letter of Elizabeth renown'd

And various matters of less import, each
‡ Jane Ireland

⊗ Mrs Freeman

⊙ Wm. Hy. Ireland

Shaksperian Hunt Contd

At separate times, and not in Mass produced
Were genuine esteem'd. The alter'd Lear;
The silken-twisted Lock to Anna Sent —
Pelic inestimable struck wonder
In the Multitude. Some indeed there were
At first Believers, who at sight of this
Shrank back in doubt. Still unappalled the Youth
Boldly dar'd adventure. And Vortigern
At length appear'd — But more of this anon,
Countless Receipts, and after lapse of time,
The Annals of our Second Henry fam'd,
And peerless Rosamond still multiplied
Th' advent'rous Fabrication. —
Of this enough, 'Tis fit I now rehearse
Th' Opinions vary'd of the numberless
Who saw the Fiction. — The Mansions open,
When straight appears the Master of the Whole,
Who rises, and, with free and courteous mien,
Each stranger greets. Then most eloquently
The forged Tale relates; after the which,
Forth from the massive Chest his Treasure draws
And offers it to public view —
N^o III. To-morrow or next day, containing the
Opinions respecting the Shaksperian MSS.
Lord Mxlgrove Miss Wallis (now Mrs Cxmphxl
Col. Phxpps
M^{rs} Kxmbly

N^o 3.

Lord Mxlgrove

Here's one of courteous mien, a Gentleman
Of noble bearing, whose upright conduct
Hath ever ward'd him from Envy's Shaft
I love him, he shows something like to those
O' the olden time. He is not custom's slave
Nor doth the Title in him mar the Man.
But soft — he came to view the public theme;
He loves the Bard, and therefore is prepar'd
To credit what he wishes were most true.
His eager transports blind his better sense;
He sees the Fire-scorch'd Lines, the mould'ring
Sheets,
Nor for a moment doubts. — Thus to the Charm
Another Link is added. — The Current
'Gins to swell; and th' enthusiastic Crowd
Press forward. — Why e'en let them come! — At
best,

Man's Life is a mere Force; and this but adds
One to the many changeful Senses.

Col. C. Phxpps.

His breeding, Sir, hath been to Arms. He loves
His God and Country, and he's bigeman sworn
Unto our Sovereign Lord the King. — 'Tis said
He likes the bustle of a Camp. No sound
More welcome to his Ear, than the harsh Thunder
From th' Cannon's belching Mouth. — He's forward
In's Country's Cause, yet when the evil Hand
Of blood-stain'd War is scorf'd in gentle Peace,
'Tis then his Nature changes. He becomes

Docile as the Lamb, and in beauty's Lap,
Is lulled to sweet repose. —

He's one who yielded to the longing Itch
Of Curiosity

He saw, was pleased and credited.

Miss Wallis now Mrs. Cxmphxl
Mark ye the lovely Maid. — lightsome her Step,
As Dew brushing Fairies, or Zephyr's breath,
That scarcely moves the bladed Grass, Her Form
Shows all of Heav'n that e'er did Mortal grace.
The modest blush plays on her dimpled Cheek,
Like th' expanded Rose waving amidst the lilies,
Observe her Eye, like Dian's radiance
Beaming on the snow-deck'd Earth, Her motions
Negligently elegant; her manner
Hath a bewitching something in't that wins
The wand'ring Gazer. Yet these perfections
Taint not her Mind with pride. She's mild as

Heav'n

When the early May-mooner sun luminous o'er
Earth

Yet hold! — She gazes on the spurious bulk;
Now dimpled smiles plays on her beautiful Cheek.
She dreams not of deccits but credence yields
To outward show

M^{rs} Kxmbly

Argus. — I know him well.

One fram'd to grace Religion's Throne. A Man
Of aspect stern; of manners that befit
The priestly Garb. — There's a something in him,
Savours of deep cunning. He best enacts
On life's stage, Coriol's proud Victor,
The sullen Jacques, or th' vengeful Tyrant.
I've known the time, and many too there are
Have thought the Counterfeit so well put on,
That it did seem the Mimic's Mind bore part;
In that he did enact. — But soft awhile,
Let's steal away, that we may unobserved
Take heedful note of his seemings.
Mark ye, he bows, and marks with furthest
Show

The Gloom that lower'd on his sullen Brow,
The Page is open'd, and his Eye,
Like lightning glances o'er the fraudulent
Scroll,

He lends an Ear, while with emphatic
Voice,

The legend is proclaimed. Mute he listens,
— Now the Reader pauses,

And his opinion craves. — Still he's silent,
And suit is further press'd. — "List," he answers
"No I did but dream." he bids the Host
Good Morn

And so retires

Oracle Oct. 29th 1799.

Shaksperian Hunt. Cont^d

No 4

M^r Stuxns, S^r Fredxxxxk Edxn.

Stuxns. Come hither, Audrey, come hither
Wench; Nay, closer yet, Now tell
me Audrey, what sort of a
Man could'st thou love.

Audrey. Lord, O love!

Stuxns. Yes, thou, Audrey.

Audrey. And must I tell thee?

Stuxns. Yes, to't with a stout heart,
thou hast a rare conception,
Audrey.

Audrey. Why then, an I must speak
Truth, I'de fain have thy fellow.

Stuxns. O! monstrous desire! Beware
Audrey for thy Wishes are greater
than the Gods will grant.
Heaven rains not such Men
now-a-day.

Audrey. How cam'st thou amongst us
then?

Stuxns. I am, as 'twere a Constellation
of Wit; the Phenomenon o'
the Age, a Comet that attracts
public admiration.

Audrey. Mass! a Comet said'st thou?
Why your Comet hath a fiery
Tail?

Stuxns. Yea he is somewhat luminous
i' the Poop, he is your mirror Comet
The Fire is i' the Head of me, I
am therefore a Comet-major,
Now hark ye, Audrey, your word
Fool hath three significations,
there is your Fool absolute, your
Fool by Proxy, and your true Fool.
Your Fool absolute hath his commence-
ment i' the Cradle, and ending
in the Grave; for being born brain-
less, he dies your Fool absolute.
Your Fool by Proxy, is your pil-
fering Knave, one that sucks the
Brains of others, and by constant
retailing Conceits, himself stor'd
with Wit. Now your true Fool
is the quintessence of Wisdom.
Look up, sweet Audrey, I am
your true Fool.

Audrey. And art thou truly he, Master Stux?

Stuxns. Age - Wench, as sure as thou art
not. Hist, hist, who comes this way?
Marry 'tis One o' the Court, now,
mark ye Audrey; In me your
true Fool is illustrated; you shall
now behold your Fool by Proxy.

Fred -

Stuxns.

Fred. -

Stuxns.

Fred. -

Stuxns.

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Fred. -

Stuxns.

Fred. -

Stuxns.

Fred. -

Stuxns.

My Brain's perplexed, I'm wonder-
struck. But how fares it with the Fool?
As with the Courtier.

Age, Marry, and how so?

As thus; I am perplex'd to think
where lies the Courtier's Brains, and
wonderstruck that thou should'st
possess any.

For what then, dost take me?

For that thou art.

And what is that?

A Courtier

Fool! haste then behold the wonder
of the Age?

Courtier, thou see'st it now, and
I beheld its Reflection in every
clear Stream.

What wonder mean'st thou?

Myself.

Art thou a wonder?

Yea, I am a true Fool.

Then the World abounds with wonders
It is stock'd with such as thee.

If as thou say'st the Courtiers
lack Brains, he is a Fool, therefore
thy equal.

True thou art a Fool, but of the
Cradle breed. Now what is the
wonder which have so bewildered
thee?

I have seen that which thou wilt
ne'er behold, The Shakspeare wonder
And thou believ'st it?

As truly as I believe thee a Fool

I could have sworn it, for 'tis
a wonder well worth thy notice.

All thy knavish wisdom will not
procure thee admittance.

Trust me, I shall not put my
Wits to the trial.

Thou'st give thy Scence to view the
Treasure.

Granted; for with it I shall ne'er
desire the sight.

The appearance stamps it old.

Yea, Fire hath the power to scorch
and there be Liquids that will rot -
But did'st thou peruse the mon-
strous Contents?

Nay, I could not decipher a
Syllable.

Excellent, i' faith. Thou art a
rare Comet, thy Wit indeed,
blazes i' the Poop of thee. Fare-
well, sweet Sir, come along
Audrey, come along Wench.

Exeunt.

Why doth the Fool engird his Wits
and taunt me thus? Am I not of the

Enter Sir Fredxxxxk Edxn, musing,
Stuxns. How does your Honour's Head?

Fred -

Shaksperian Hunt Cont^d

Court, A learned Knight, one skilled in Tongues, and seemly behaviour; cannot I judge between what is and is not? Tush wherefore did I listen to you Crazy Jester? It is a Treasure, age, and matchless one. - Faith, now I think on't, I'll home and set my Brain to work. I'll scribble thick Folios shall amaze the Court, yea, confound the multitude, and then confus'd, the hell deck'd Fool shall say, whether my Wits be foolish, yea or nay. Exit running.

Oracle Oct. 31st 1799.

No 5.

D^r P^rrr, and D^r W^rrxon.

What Men are these? who foremost of the Throng? With stately port advance. Sure I know them.

Why, yes, they are two as learned Doctors As England's Realm e'er boasted - Godly Men, Religion's Vot'ers, who, like the Shepherd, Tend their Flocks, and scare with Truths all potent,

The Wolf-devouring Hell's Fiend malicious.

Mark how the Lines of either's Countenance Betray the Brain scholastic fraught. Each Mind Boasts kindred with the Greek and Roman Sage; In either I behold a Homer fam'd, A Hesiod or Pindar, a Horace too, Or Virgil, and the Roman Cicero, Renoun'd for Declamation eloquent.

And could I swell my Page, not these alone But countless Names of grave Philosophers And Chroniclers whose Labours have preserved Their Countries Annals. That after Ages, Each virtuous Act applauding, might attempt Th' emulation of their glorious Feats.

But wherefore stay I from my purpose thus? See how they smile and gaze with wond'ring Eye

Upon each Object in this Chamber fam'd! View now the massive Key, the Bolt's springback, Harshly on its Hinges grates the iron Door, Which ever from the prying gaze of Man

The fabricated Treasure hides. Now first Each Deed with cautious Eye these learned Men

Survey. At length enraptur'd each exclaims, "Most genuine, most wonderful! Aron, Grown calmer: Wh^r - n fair would see The lucky Youth who first these Relics found Forthwith he enters; when the wond'ring gaze On him is turned, Abash'd he stands, nor dares His downcast Eyes upraise. He hears their Words They animate his fear-fraught Soul; and now With caution he the cunning Tale relates, While't every mould'ring Scrap appears to vouch And stamp his Words with evidence. But of all One was most their admiration: I mean The Tenets of our Bard. How they admir'd, And on the sweet simplicity of style Profusely lavish Praises. One indeed,

For I have oftentimes heard the Words repeated, Enraptur'd cried - "The Service of our Church Have ever been admir'd. Our Library With Beauties manifold abounds. But here Here Sir, is a Man who all have distanc'd. P^rrr, the sapient, with look profound - with

Head

Of wond'rous import - thus his Mind express'd "I love sweet Avon's child. There's sterling

Ore

Mingled with worthless Dross. In learning, Sir, I am an Epicurean, pursuing

Merely for idle Sport our Shakspeare's Verse, Our Milton's, and the rest - 'Tis when the Greek In rumbling majesty, or Latin chaste, Meet my regard, that I can feel inspir'd.

Oh Sir! I'm transported beyond myself; With mighty Ajax when I scour the Field, Hand to Hand meet th' Eagle-crested Hector, But to Achilles charg'd, I Priam's Son Defeat; and girded round with Ajax Belt Leash him to my Chariot Wheel. -

Chamelion like, I next the Form assuming I'll-fam'd Olysses. - but my Passions pent Like Priam's Ghost, I can, o'er ruin'd Troy

Shed Tears of blood. -

Silent did W^rtxon sit, while this his Friend Proclaim'd his likings. But though he spoke not, Yet did he from his Soul the Cheat believe.

At length they rose with admiration fraught, And quitted the courteous Owner of the Store, The wond'ring Youth, fill'd with rapturous glow,

To find his great attempt thus prais'd - heedless Pursued his Course, nor once of Danger dreamt, Till in the dark Abyss too deeply plung'd He strove the Shore to gain. But vain th' attempt He sunk, the thoughtless Fool of vanity.

Oracle Nov. 2nd

No 6

M^r C^xlxan

Soft! Who comes this way?

Sure mine Eyes are not deceiv'd - N^tis he, I'll not move my speech, nor with sugar'd Tongue

Make Corruption Sweet. No, let the Lash gall, For well his Papers merit such rebuke; He's sick in Reputation - one that lolls In Beauty's Lap, and basks the two-long Day In pleasure's gaudy Sunshine - Alos! the hour that such degenerate Seed Should spring from wholesome Stock. I knew his Sire,

A Man most excellent in's Qualities, And stor'd with Brain prolific. - His Offspring This witless Wond'rer round the forked Muren, Possessing written Relicks of his Sire, Connects them to 's purpose; and thinks to ape The worthy Parent long defunct. - But no

Shaksperian Hunt. Cont^d

His manners are too gross, his life too free,
To stamp him genius fraught - Besides he pluck'd
Forth from Nature's Garden a dainty Fruit,
And for a Season wore it next his Heart.
But satiate grown, loathing cast it from him,
And took a Weed luxurious to his Arms.
But love comes; and with him, the Partner
Of's sweet dalliance. -

Enter Mr CxLxan intoxicated, and
Mrs. GxhxS CxLxan. *Mr & Mrs Bolman*

CxLxan. I tell thee, Wench, thy Name is
Doll, Dame Tearsheet. - Were
my Companions here, they'd
Vouch for me that thou art Doll.
Why where's Pounce, where's
Sir John, where's Poinis and
Bardolph. - Sirrahs; I say come
forth, and see how I will kiss my
Doll.

GxhxS. I am no Tearsheet, I am no Doll,
I am as worthy a Woman as any
in the Cheap.

CxLxan. Ah thou'rt an excellent Wench,
for thy breeding have taught
thee to bear with me. And such
meet Company for me. A plague
on 'em, I hate your frosty Dames,
your ice-tongued Maids; give me
the sprightly Breed; Give me I
say my Doll.

GxhxS. Hold awhile, you have forgot, you
must to the Place appointed; and
there decide upon the new-found
Treasure.

CxLxan. Peace, Wench, I will not thither
Why they prate about this musty
Store as if the Writer were a God.
And thou know'st well enough, I
can out-run this Vaunted Bard.
Why there's not a Word in me but
savours of Morality, my Mind's
prolific, I am Nature's Child nor
deign to think like other Men.

GxhxS. Troth, George, 'tis not thought so,
would'st thou believe't?

CxLxan. Believe what?

GxhxS. Why 'tis said that thou can'st
meddle with Will Shakspeare as
well as the best.

CxLxan. They lie, Doll; yes, and to their
Teeth, I'll tell them so; 'shlood,
must a Man of Wit be ever made
the Taunt of Fools

GxhxS. Aye, and I was told, that one
O'erlooking thy Works, ope'd the
Page of Shakspeare and exclaim'd
"A Thief by Heavens, Stop Thief."
upon the which I vented Tears of
bitter Rage; and said my George

was not a Thief, but a right honest
Penman. Yea, and he that loved
his Dolly Truly, and dost not love
me now.

CxLxan. I love thee sure as I do my Bottle
of sack, the one glads my Heart by
Day, the other by Night. Is't not
so my Girl?

GxhxS. Tush! no more o' this. Indeed
thou'lt make me blush.

CxLxan. Then must Bardolph be by; for the
reflection of his firebrand could
alone work such a Wonder.

GxhxS. But wilt thou to the Norfolk Mansion?

CxLxan. No, not I, a Fig for't, I say I'll not
budge. Were there a lewd Ballad
indeed, or bawdry in't, why then
I'd thither. Aye, and Sir John too,
and those my Chuck, should'st along
with me, but as it is I'll none on't
So come along Wench, let's in, the
lozy Rogues will soon be with me.

Exeunt

Mrs. CxLxan

See where dejectedly she wends her way
Her colourless Cheek, deck'd with gummy Dew!
Thus have I oft beheld the lily waving:
When some rude Passer-by had snapp'd its stalk,
Leaving it to pine and die: - Look, her Breast
Heaves as it would burst. - Mark that silent Tear!
It hath its Source in Men's ingratitude.
Fair one, O pity thee, O may the Page,
Though false, afford thee Pleasure. Soft her look
Assumes serenity, pleas'd she beholds
And eager listens. - Now her plaintive Voice
Proclaims her thoughts. Why so she is deceiv'd.
May she again ne'er feel Deception's Tooth,
But lull her Sorrows in forgetfulness.

Oracle. Nov. 6th 1799.

No. VII Oracle Nov. 11th 1799.

Imitations

Enter Sir Jxhn Lxdx and Txmmy Onslxw.

Sir Jxhn. The fleetest Hounds, I dare be sworn
That e'er yet cours'd the nimble Stag,
Would not outvie in swiftness my
roan Steed. 'Tis a Beast, Sir, high
in Mettle, steady in's Paces, sound
in all its Points; nay, and so sure
of Foot, that I would back the Horse
myself, and scour full speed even
on the frowning Precipice that bend's
o'er Dover's pebbled Beach. I'd leap
him o'er the deep-dug Trench and
clear the opposing Barrier. What Horse
can do my Roan shall dare.

Onslxw. Marry, an he be so good a Beast, I
should marvelously like to bestride him



"Tommy Onslow."

Conspicuous among these famous whips was Lord Onslow—Tommy Onslow as he was familiarly called. Captain Gronow tells us that "his carriage was painted black, and the whole turn-out had the appearance of belonging to an undertaker." He also speaks of the excellence of a caricature of the noble Jehu which was to be seen at Mrs. Humphreys' shop in St. James' Street, and the glee with which all who had known the original read the lines affixed.

Shaksperian Flunt Contd.

but then methinks 'would seem as if a Sparrow perch'd upon his back; for I'm named you know, the little Tummy.

Sir Jxhn. Why verily; when thou assum'st the seat of Charioteer, thy part have little majesty in't. I've oftentimes likened thee to a Flea on Bardolph's Nose, or a Button on the Vest of a fat Alderman. Thou art most truly of the pigmy breed.

Onslxw. Beshrew me but I like your Conceit passing well, though it is not of the most mannerly.

Sir Jxhn. Well, no matter, we of the Court, know you sauce not our Phrases like those of the Court, but whether mend you?

Onslxw. I am for the public Ride with all convenient speed.

Sir Jxhn. And I shall hire me to the Shakspeare Treasure; perchance some Lines may vount the Rider's powers, or praise the skilful Charioteer.

Onslxw. Most regolly judged; and now I think on't I'll thither with you Faith, and what say you?

Sir Jxhn. We'll bet upon our Beasts I'll take you what you list, that I from hence to Master Ireland's before you.

Sir Jxhn. Agreed, there's forty Marks upon my Bays.

Onslxw. Come let us away, I long to assay this feat, Oh! how it delights me to see the Rabbie with vacant store follow the Rattle from Chariot wheels.

Sir Jxhn. I attend

Exeunt.

How eagerly they mount their lofty Seats,
Each the Rein assumed, and waves the ample Lash:
Now the Signals given - The Steeds impetuous
Foaming grind the polish'd Bit - So they start,
And like a Whirlwind sweep along the Way.

The howling Wheels in rattling clangour move;
Chariots give room, and the gaping multitude,
Astonish'd eye these mad Knights of the Whip.
Now Onslxw gains, and now by the rod's length
Lxdx outstrips him. Now Beast to Beast they turn,
Each the Manarin views, and each his Courser
Forward urges with redoubled Fury;
They curb the Rein, and 'fore the Portal halt,
Neither the Conquer'd nor the Conqueror.

The Bets are doubled and it is agreed
The Race at fitting opportunity
Should be again rehearsed. At length they gain
The studious Closet fam'd. Anon the Door
Flies open to receive them. They enter,
And scarce have salutations pass'd when lo
Stxckpxl appears, who likewise comes to view
The musty Relicks. - Now they are produc'd,

And surely three more sapient Gentlemen
Ne'er gazed upon the full-orb'd Moon - Lxdx first
His judgment thus express'd -

Lxdx. I swear by Epsom, Onslxw, there's
Witchery in't; were I not otherwise
assur'd I would have vouch'd that
They had strew'd the Sheets in filthy
'bacco, they smell like any Hostler's
Top-room i' the Cheap.

Onslxw. Mass, and so they do, and, now
I belthink me the 'dair of these same
Relicks is like the Cost of Barberrry,
my old chestnut Mare; but the scent
to my mind savours more of firing
the Fellock. What say'st thou, Stxckpxl?

Stxckpxl. Barring the greasy Ointment that
will sweat through in the dressing,
I should rather liken them to the
Paper that enfolds a Chop a-la-Main-
Tenon, which is ever scorch'd thus.

Onslxw addressing M^r Irxland.
Kind Sir, is there aught contain'd
in this all wind'rous Store that
Touches on my Art?

Sir Jxhn. Or mine?

Stxckpxl. Or is there the History of a hoisterous
Tavern Feast? I hate your swinding
Phrases, your touching Lays of Love
and Charity; give me a Dinner, and
my Cup of sugar'd Sack.

Gentle Sirs, I fear these Presents do
but ill accord with your several desires.
First, Master Onslxw the Bird was
not of the Jockey Crew, that he rode
passing well, I grant ye, but his
Heaven was on a Pegasus, a Steed
unknown to ye all. He could drive, too,
excellently well, Sir Jahn; but his
was the Apollonian Chariot, and
his leash'd Horses those of the line.
He feasted too at Taverns in the
Cheap, good Master Stxckpxl but
the Companions of his Revels were your
True Touchstones, and no deep drinking;
they quoth of rich draughts from
Helicon's clear Brook, and did not
swallow Bumpers of Sack and Rhenish;
they were godly Yeomen too that
always paid their Costs, and would
not gorge at another's Charge. Thus
methinks, ye have miss'd the Mark,
and wasted Time, which were more
preciously employ'd i' the public
Ride and Haunts of hoisterous Revelry.
Marry! an I think so too; you judge
bright, Sir, Men are fickle, and
something prone to waver in opinion.
Therefore I take my leave.

Sir Jxhn. And I, come along Tummy, We'll
to the Boor's Head, I long to have the Feast
at my Cost, we shall meet a merry Crew, trust
me.

Onslxw. Master Ireland, I humbly press your Hand
Irxland. Gentles all, farewell. Exeunt

NO VIII In the course of a Day or two - An Hundred.
Numbers are already prepared containing the Opinions
of the most distinguished Public Characters of the Shakspeare
MSS.

The Shakspeare Closet by Wm. Hy. Ireland from the Oracle Newspaper.

No I.

The Confessions of Masterre Samuelle
William Henerye Irelande

In the true and genuine confession of all my ingenious forgeries, I have stated the vanity which assailed me in the Closet of my Fatherre. I beg pardon for my orthography; but really I have used so many superfluous letters in the MSS. that the modern System has gone out of my mind, and besides the Universities where I studied did not make spelling any part of my education - I have forgotten it, or never knew it correctly - which it was I cannot remember now.

As everything from a genius, such as I now find mine to be, must last, I will describe the Closet where my water-marks, and my writings, were shown to our visitors. I must do the place the justice to say that no one could better aid the purpose of imposition. My Father I have said was a curious man - He has a taste for painted glass, and curious prints, and old pictures; and valuable manuscripts and old books.

His Closet therefore was curious. - You approached it by an anti-room of genuine Hogarths; and when the mind has once taken an antiquarian bent, it is as yielding, my friend Talbot tells me, as a good Toledo - it may bend hilt to point in the circumference of a peck. The circumference of the Closet is not great - "narrow is the path that leads" - as Dr. Joseph Warton often said.

Into this Closet had been taken all the prints and drawings analogous to Shakspeare (I find in my pamphlet I spelt his name without the e at the end, which as in the forgeries I gave him so plentifully, his name may very well Bear. Spear is spear as well as spere or speare, as Mr. Chalmers has proved.

How I came to forget my own work, and write it in the said pamphlet, as no other creature ever did from the creation of the world, I know not - but in my Confession I have spelt it

Shakspear.

But to the prints - We had Droeshout's head, and Marshall's head, and my head. We had the Courting Chair, which my Father found; when he courted Jane (?) Hatherrnaye, and a browner bit of chestnut or oak never cooped in the amorous parl's of a Poet - I have frequently sat

in it myself so there needs no more proof.

In my pamphlet I have mentioned the many circumstances conducing to my forgeries. Never let any Genius after me think of a profession. If my Father had not been a Weaver, I had never unravelled the old Tapestry to tie up the MSS. If I had not been a Clerk to a Lawyer, I had never learned Cramp hands, nor forgot the deeds of gift - If I had not known the Bookbinder's Marbler, I should not have found foxy ink. If my Father had not been a Man of taste, I could never have imposed upon him.

In my next number, I shall enter myself the Closet of Shakspear - in my Doveyring I shall exhibit the manner of reading the MSS. the magnifying glass, the drawers which held the Deeds, and the manner and expression of all the visitors to whom they were shown - and I will also print the letters, which credulity dictated. S. W. H. Ireland

No II on Saturday next

No II

Here I shall attempt the proper mode of spelling.

In the first number of these Confessions, I stated the Record I intended to leave Eternity of these transactions. As the basis on which I build is that of Truth only, I must decline any aid from Fancy and Fiction. I proceed therefore to record the manner in which the MSS. were shown to the curious. I must pay the tribute of filial admiration - Never was there a Wonder with a better Showman, The Black Cat of Waterfello, or Graham's Giants; the Vergers who show the Tombs of Westminster (see my fine Fragment of William Conqueror) the lop ear of General Monk, or the Cicero of the Horse Armoury - all shrink into nothing before my Showman.

After the solemn expectation of an hour in an outer Apartment, each Man "gnawing me his lanky fingers", with the tremours of anxious delight, the Showman himself appeared - his countenance bright with triumph, sparkling with joy, and even the Kitten purring applause upon the Hearth, among the laves of the House, where Shakspear's remains were sheltered. "A present Deity they shout around!
A present Deity, the walls resound."

The Shakspeare Closet Cont^d

The Showman usually prefaced his remarks by a cautious inquiry of the name of the newly-found Proselyte, a step he had been compelled to take by the unjust and ungentlemanly conduct of the Commentators. They had, it appeared, unseen, refused to believe in the new Shakspear. They had set at work every engine to vilify his Immortal Treasures, and injure his property - and M^r Malone had gone so far as to desire to try their authenticity in another house. It was for this reason, that he had resolved to afford every other Man of science and literature an opportunity to behold the divine Relics, except the said M^r Malone, but this is not all.

"Needuni etiam causæ irrorum
Sævique dolores
Exciderant animo

(A passage I was once flogged at St. Omers for not being able to construe.) That Gentleman, it appears had a head, brought from the Stratford Monument en masque (as I used to say in France), which he refused to show once to the Possessor of the Bard's Papers, A refusal he was not known to have made, when solicited by any other gentleman.

"For M^r Stevens", a little more kindness was felt - "He was only mischievous, and were he to call upon me" (the Showman used to add) "I do not know, that I should refuse him the sight of what must convert his editions into waste paper."

When, as shortly I may do, I publish a genuine Shakspear cleared from all the corruptions, Interpolations, and Obscenities, with which the Commentators have suffered him to remain disfigured, then you will see that his Muse was as chaste, as it was sublime; that he was the finished Gentleman, as well as the inspired Poet of the age - to whom Monarchs did not disdain to write, and with whom Nobles did not refuse to associate."

I used to perceive here, that my Father got great ease as he proceeded, and made astonishing impression upon his Visitors. I sometimes sauntered into the Closet - received the compliments of the Curious as the finder - displayed my Ring, to sanction the story of the wealthy Friend who had bestowed them upon me - and then I retired, as I said, to take my Morning Ride in Hyde Park with the Gentleman in the Clouds of Six Thousand Pounds a year. !!!

To be continued regularly and faithfully
by S. W. H. I.

N.B. Shakspear's The Whole length Portrait of the divine Man - His velvet Suit and Sword, in which he played before Elizabeth - The miraculous Lock of Hair - His Seal Ring, &c. &c. on Tuesday Certain.

III

I have been so taken up with concerting our Apology lately, that I cannot proceed so rapidly as I wish in my Confessions, I resume them however, like the Sweet Chicken, who ventures out from her Shed, when the Rain is passed away, and calls her living Eggs around her.

I have described my Showman accurately, He used to exhibit my Works in the following style. "Now then, Sir," he would say, "you shall see the artless fancy of our Bard, exhibited in genuine Love-song. Here are some verses to his Warwickshire Maid - the lovely Hatherrwaye." He took down immediately a Morocco Portfolio elegantly gilt and lettered, "Shakspeare MSS." between the Royal Paper of which lay my fly-leaved and fly-bitten Relics.

He presented the tender Fragment to the Inspector, and with a huge burning-glass, read aloud the inspired Song of the Swan of Avonne.

I declare to Heaven, I have listened week after week, at the Door of this Closet, to the language of Wigs - Cues (I believe it should be Queues,) and Crops, (I am myself a Crop) and I never heard any expressions of less warmth than, Divine! exquisite, enchanting, pure, fascinating, overpowering, unequalled, indisputable.

The Lords and Ladies, it is true had no great vocabulary of exclamation - they said that it was - beautiful! an expression they apply equally to a Mountain and a

Cataract, or a love-locket, and a Lap-Dog.

I have quoted the rhapsodies of Dr. Warton. They warmed the very "heart of heart" - but I have not told the Public of my legal Testimonies. One morning I had come from Chambers, having just finished the democratic Speech of the Senator in King Vortgerinne, when I heard that the great Lawyer, M^r Erskine, was in the Closet. I went in after a short time, to observe his manner. The enthusiasm with which he catches at his object, convinced me he would become a Proselyte. He said, in a tremulous tone, his eyes glistening with graceful sensibility "to deny these Proofs is attempting to blot the Sun out of Heaven". At the Bar he would have said more; but it is the well-known

The Shakespeare Closet Contd


practise of this pleader never to travel out of records, in other words, to venture out of his depth. As soon as he had said this much, therefore (as he does in another place) he grew extremely ill, and sat down in the Carving Chair.

My Showman instantly rose, and with his usual loquacity, ran over his common-places against the Commentators. Infatuated Scribblers! what will they say, when I shall prove, that our Immortal Man never wrote a line of Troilus and Cressida; that he has left it under his hand, it was the worst play he ever read!

When I shall show them the very Velvet Suit in which he played before the Queen, who loved him; his Sword of Ceremony - the Ring with the Saxon letters W.S. a present from the Royal Idol of his Soul; and a whole-length Portray (his word) of the Bard, with his left hand upon the Hilt of his Weapon, and the right reposing on a Table, with all the sweet Majesty of his dignified and venerable Countenance.

The Pleader rose, and striking a Leaf of the MSS. with a vehemence, which made my Showman tremble, he remarked upon the whole Exhibition in these words. -

"I might assume to myself as much knowledge of this subject as any Man - I can repeat many whole Plays of Shakespeare by heart - I use them as I do the Statutes, and as often. I have Paradise Lost in equal remembrance, and all the eloquent passages of Burke, but it is not my habit to rely upon my Judgment, in these things out of my Profession - yet this I take upon me to affirm, that the Man who says these Leases, that Wax, and this Court-hand are not genuine, is a legal heretic, and should never be suffered to read a Common Law-Book, or make a Half-guinea Motion once in six Terms."

 To be continued regularly and faithfully by S.W.H.I.

N.B. The Soliloquy of the Bastard - the Confession - My Hair - Sir Isaac - Mr Wallis, Mr Chalmers, Lord Palmerston, Mrs Crewe, all Speedily.

IV

In my last I promised some elucidations respecting the Soliloquy of Edmund the Bastard in King Lear, always I confess, a speech peculiarly interesting to my nature and feelings. To make it still closer apply to my habits, I determined upon some alterations. - It opens thus in the common Books -

Thou Nature art my Goddess! To thy Law My services are bound. Wherefore should I Stand in the plague of custom?

One day at Chambers, after Foster Powell had walked off, I was at my usual work, or as I styled it to Talbot, at the forge - when anticipating the Glory and the Fortune I should acquire, by writing new Lears and Hamlets, I suddenly rose, and execrated the tedious and crooked labyrinths of law - for every man has not the luck to conduct an Impeachment, and much business is done, that scarce pays itself; as for instance, Petitions in Cases of Election against Members duly returned, which nobody will either publicly own, or privately pay, At this moment I had the fly-leaf out to transcribe the Bastard's Soliloquy. My indignation hurried me on, and I wrote it thus, commenting as I went on, in this manner.

"Thou Nature art my Goddess!

That said I, is a sure thing - as incontestable as that I am a Lawyer's Hack. With a little alteration from the original, I added,

"To the Law

My services stand bound
The reason of the alteration to the word stand, was simply this; that I was an Articled Clerk, and that no disinclination on my part could set me free from what stood good in law. Yet ambition stimulated me to show my indentures a fair pair of heels, and accordingly I went on altering

"Wherefore should I

Rest in the plague of custom?"

They who know how irksome honest industry is to ingenious fraud, will forgive me these slight corruptions of the text. But to return to our Exhibition.

One day my Showman told me, a person had been there, whom we had seen before, and desired permission to look at a celebrated scene in the Lear, when a difficulty occurred, which had baffled all those senseless Scoundrels the Commentators.

"Her smiles and tears were like a better May, (or better May, or better Day, or God knows what the Blockheads have made of it)

My Showman, though wrapt up in triple brass, looked instantly like the sound of a Trumpet. He took down Butler's quarto 1608. There he found it, in all its impurity. He then ran away for the Second Folio, that had been Theobald's - there he found it not. The scene was certainly written by Shakespeare. It was exquisitely beautiful, though short; the Players had indeed omitted it in their Book; but when we had the genuine MSS. of the Poet to refer to, there doubtless it would be found, and in its uncorrupted beauty and clearness. He thought of an answer. He did not know whether it was

The Shakspeare Closet Contd.

in the genuine MS., or not, nor had he the whole Play together. He had in truth only the nine first, and the last leaves; the rest was copying out, as the hand was very difficult to decypher.

Nobody but myself, in fact, could read it - How should they? I wrote it. The Showman read always a transcript on the opposite side in the Morocco Portfolios, with the large burning Glass I have mentioned. I saw the show man grow sceptical - he was shown no more - He came no more. - This was a Critic; a race I abhor.

Better things appeared - Sir Isaac a Man of great heraldic Science looked very attentively at my Seals; pronounced them authentic, considered profoundly the Arms I had scribbled with Pen and Ink; and, although I knew so little of the matter, that I had turned the Spear the wrong way - he exhibited the most entire conviction of its being a genuine Blazon.

Lord Palmerston and Mrs Crewe, then came in together. Converts. My Showman judiciously insinuated that the Papers should never go out of his Hands, except he was ordered to Buckingham House - to make Royal Converts (N.B. I suspect G. Nicol of satisfying his M^s curiosity upon the subject) They heard all the Showman had to say; and my Lord, who has a pretty collection of Pictures, said he should think Four Thousand Guineas well held out in the Portrait of the Divine Man.

Egad! he should have had one - but I spent a long and tiresome Day in Harp Alley, looking among the whiskered Heroes of past times - but I could find no Head bold enough and high enough to answer the purpose - and M^r Fenton had bought the Flemish Fragment most like Droeshout's Head.

As to the Lady, She languished after the Lock of his Hair most. My Showman presented her with a single Hair. There were a couple of Ovary symptoms of population at one end of it. The Hair was all my own; The Lock of course, like the Catholic Relics, was inexhaustible.

She is a lively clever woman, I think, for she parodied very well thus:

"Had all his Lines been Hairs, my
ardent love
Has Stomach for them all."

To be faithfully continued by S.W.H.I

V

We had just done clanking the eight Guineas left by the honourable Scribes, mentioned with so much affection

in my last, when Lord Lauderdale and another Gentleman were announced.

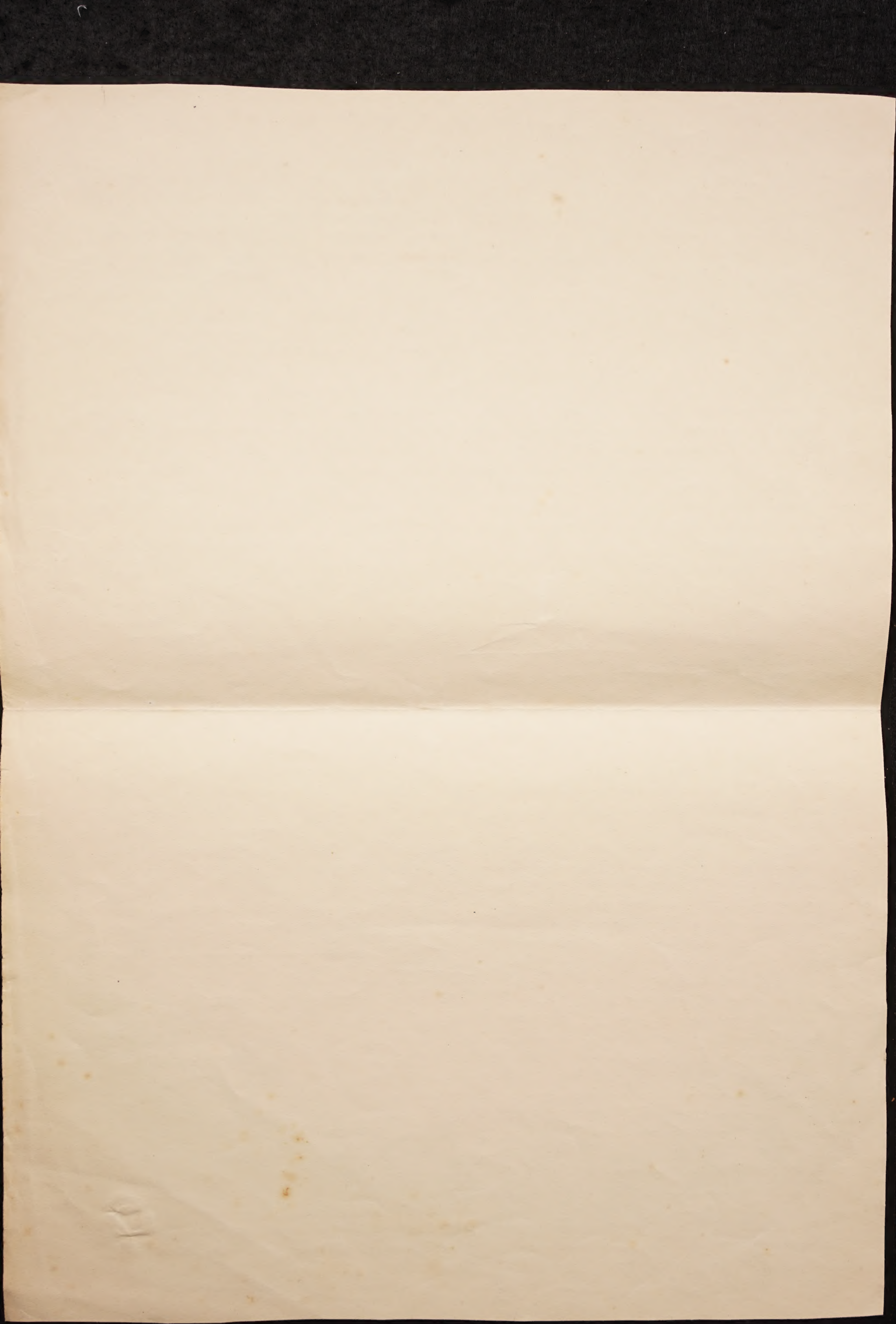
His Companion we soon recognised to be undoubtedly, M^r Grey; who certainly has ~~certainly~~ applied himself to Polite Letters, with no less success than that which has attended him in Finance - most undoubtedly he has. Lord Lauderdale brought upstairs with him eighteen Volumes and a pretty thick Notebook with a brass Clasp. My Showman having been in the House of Peers, was not to be gulled this way. The Books alarmed him just as little as, in another place, they have done Lord Grenville.

As to his Lordship's Speech, he, like other people, was determined to hear that, as you do any other nuisance, until you can get rid of it.

Upon looking at the Books, I found they were two editions of an Author printed in the year 1715 and 1745. His Grace said he preferred them. The caution of the modern Publishers very much lowered the Spirit of the Works; and besides M^r Malone he understood, had gone out of his way in his Commentaries, as far as intimating that this Country was in the Road to ruin, through the countenance given to French Doctrines; and that he, the said M^r Malone, had impiously wished that France were blotted from the Map of Europe, Expressions highly reprehensible, because no Man but a professed Politician can have the welfare of his Country strongly at heart, and none but a Patriot can feel the actual importance of France, as the Hlave (or knave) of the Revolutionary Wheel.

M^r Grey said, "undoubtedly they could not" - As I was to set the simple young Man on this occasion, as Shakspeare says, "must be idle". - I got me a place as near the Senators as I could, while they were shown the MSS. Papers. After my artless Verses had been read, and admitted to be undoubtedly genuine, Lord Lauderdale asked my Showman whether he had a taste for Scottish Song? He readily replied, that he had a very great taste; upon which, to my utter astonishment, the noble Lord recited, with his Handkerchief in his right Hand, the following Lines.

The Rowschot croud is pykkis on the ryse
The Stirling changis divers Steunnys ryse,
The Sparrow chirnis in the wallis clytt,
Goldsprink and lintquhite fordynnand the left,
The Gukhowgalis, and so quhytteris the Quale
Arrhil ryveris veardit, schawis, and every dole
And tender twistis trymbkit on the treis,
For birdis sang, and beemyng of the beis.



The Shakspeare Closet. Contin^d

My Showman, blushing to the very tip of his ears, begged a copy of this exquisite Verse, which he said he took to be a recent composition by Burns. Lord Lauderdale replied, that though in the case of Shakspeare he could visibly tell the genuine from the spurious, (here I turned pale) yet that here he had been deceived; for the Verse he had recited was written by Gaven Douglas.

M^r Grey said he imagined it to be Ossian. His Friend with his broad pronunciation of E like A answered, that was in Erse.

As I resolved to introduce it in my Fairy Play of Tanaquil, I begged a translation, which I wrote down on the left side of the Morocco Book, habitually.

This is the English:-

"The Ringdove coos, and pitches on the
Bell Copse

The Starling whistles her varied descent
The Sparrow chirps in the clefted Wall
The Goldfinch and Linnet filled the Skies
The Cuckoo cried, the Quail twittered
While Rivers, Shaws, and every Dale
resounded,

And the tender Branches trembled on the
Trees,

At the Song of the Birds and the buzzing
of the Bees."

I saw that our Visitors were mightily taken with the secret History I had trumped up, and they asked particularly whether Southampton had ever communicated to Shakspeare any particulars of his Friend Essex's rebellion.

I said at once that such Papers did exist - and that as to Guy Faux there was a little life of that great Conspirator in the handwriting of the Poet, who knew him intimately.

M^r Grey thought we should now undoubtedly come at the bottom of that singular Transaction.

To be faithfully continued by S.W.H.I.



Shakspeare's Hat - The Folios -
Heminge's the Lover of Shakspeare's
Wife - all speedily.

Professor Scott intends to search the
original Oracle Newspaper to see if
this was continued.

